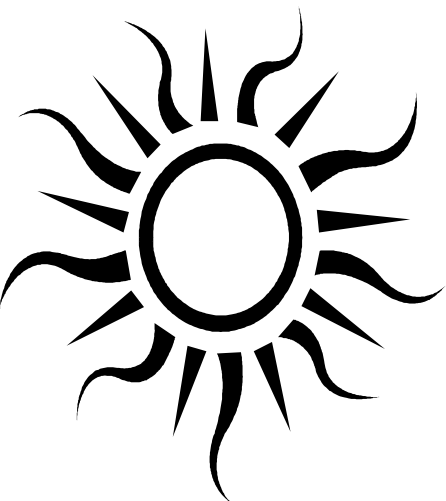


# Department of Human Services

Prepared by the  
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Communications  
(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

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Published November 6, 2006

## Ricky case may expand changes at state agency

More action could follow criminal probe

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

Now that Tim and Lisa Holland have been held accountable in the criminal justice system for their adopted son's death, more changes could be coming for the state agency that handled Ricky Holland's foster care and adoption.

An investigation by the state's Office of Children's Ombudsman into the Department of Human Services' handling of the case has been completed. But the results will not be revealed until the criminal investigation is complete, said Charlotte Smith, an investigator for the ombudsman's office.

The findings include recommendations made to the DHS and the agency's response to those recommendations.

Smith would not say how long the investigation lasted or when it concluded. Three investigators from the ombudsman's office were assigned to the Holland case, Smith said; most cases have only one.

Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings III has not said when he expects the criminal investigation to wrap up.

Authorities also have interviewed Lisa Holland's parents, Tom and Betty Taylor of Williamston, in connection with 7-year-old Ricky's death.

The DHS also has conducted its own internal investigation.

"For the most part, it has been completed," spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet said last week.

After the Hollands were arrested in January and more information came out, legislators and state officials vowed to look into what else they could have done to prevent Ricky's death.

### Changes made

DHS Director Marianne Udow this summer described changes at the agency, which she said were part of an overhaul of the child welfare system that began before Ricky's death. The tragedy accelerated its efforts, she said.

Changes included more criminal background checks on foster parents and relatives. Children's Protective Services also has hired more caseworkers.

### What's next

- Lisa Holland, who has been convicted of first-degree felony murder and first-degree child abuse, is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 28 to life in prison without the possibility of parole.
- A sentencing hearing for Tim Holland, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, is scheduled for Nov. 15.

The Hollands became Ricky's foster parents in October 2000, when he was 3. The family lived in Jackson at the time; Jackson County DHS placed Ricky in the home. The Hollands later adopted Ricky as well as three of his siblings who now range in age from 2 to 4.

Ricky's siblings, as well as the Hollands' 2-year-old biological daughter, now are living with Tim Holland's relatives.

### **Injured brother**

The Hollands moved to Williamston in May 2005, two months before Ricky slowly died from a head wound he suffered when Lisa Holland struck him with a small hammer, according to testimony at her murder trial. The boy's body was not found until January this year.

Ingham County social workers beginning in October 2005 documented bruises and other injuries on one of Ricky's younger brothers.

In December 2005, when the boy was asked about bruises, scratches and other marks on his body, he said, "Momma did it," according to court records.

One month later, according to the records, the boy blamed Lisa Holland for scratches on his neck. The Hollands were arrested soon after on unrelated charges and eventually charged in Ricky's death. Tim Holland pleaded guilty to second-degree murder; Lisa Holland was found guilty of first-degree felony murder and child abuse.

The Office of Children's Ombudsman, established by the Legislature in 1994, investigates cases handled by the DHS. Its budget for the fiscal year ending in October 2005 was \$1.28 million.

The ombudsman's office investigated four cases in Ingham County from October 2004 through September 2005, according to the agency's most recent annual report. Throughout the state, 111 complaints were opened for investigation.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

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## Police probe child's death

Sunday, November 05, 2006

The Jackson Police Department is investigating the death of a 1-year-old child Saturday morning.

Police arrived at a home in the 1200 block of Laurel Lane around 11 a.m.

"We're treating it as suspicious," Sgt. Elmer Hitt said.

Hitt declined to release any details Saturday night.

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Published November 4, 2006

## Slain tot's brother describes abuses

Mom's boyfriend struck kids, 12-year-old testifies

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

### What's next

- The murder trial for 32-year-old Samuel Courtland of Lansing continues Monday. The prosecution is expected to rest its case.

A 12-year-old boy testifying Friday in the murder trial of his mother's former boyfriend described how the man whipped his younger brother with a belt and once burned his brother's feet with a household iron.

Samuel Courtland, 32, of Lansing, is charged with murder and child abuse in the death of his former girlfriend's 2-year-old son, Jalyn Daniel.

Cynthia Daniel, 31, has pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and child abuse. She is expected to take the stand Monday and testify against Courtland.

In the months before Jalyn's May 2005 death, the 12-year-old boy described seeing severe burns on his brother's feet.

"It was like how you have a scab, but it was peeled off, and you could see the meat and the blood," the boy, who is in the seventh grade, testified.

When the 12-year-old asked Jalyn how the burns happened, he pointed to an iron, saying "that, that," the seventh-grader said. Jalyn then looked at Courtland, who had been in the house alone with the child.

Prosecutors have said when Jalyn was taken to the emergency room May 14, 2005, he had burn marks on his feet, crushed bones in one hand and the imprint of a household iron on his back and buttocks. Jalyn's official cause of death was pneumonia, but authorities have said it was brought on by complications from blunt-force trauma.

Jalyn's 12-year-old brother also testified that on May 12, 2005, Jalyn was "breathing like he had something stuck in his throat ... like a monster." That night, Cynthia Daniel and a friend had gone to a Mount Pleasant casino, leaving Courtland to care for the children.

He described hearing Jalyn that night crying in the kitchen, as Courtland told him to eat his food. He said he heard the "smack, smack, smack" of what he believed was a belt striking Jalyn.

He said Courtland would hit or whip Jalyn with a belt for things like not eating all his food or wetting his underwear.

The State Journal is choosing not to reveal the names of children testifying in the case.

Courtland's attorney, Peter Samouris, focused on inconsistencies in how the 12-year-old has described events. Reading from transcripts, Samouris pointed out that he told police Courtland used his hand, not a belt, to hit Jalyn.

The seventh-grader testified Courtland also tied up another boy in the basement and whipped him, leaving gashes on both arms and legs.

When Cynthia Daniel returned from the casino in the early morning of May 13, 2005, Jalyn wouldn't waken, and she took him into the bathroom and splashed water on his face, he testified. He said Jalyn's breathing had worsened.

They dressed to leave for the hospital, but Courtland told them Jalyn was fine, that he'd eaten jalapeno peppers, according to the testimony. They didn't go to the hospital. The next day, the 12-year-old said Jalyn's condition worsened, like he didn't have bones in his legs and arms.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

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This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published November 3, 2006

## Accused killer's son says dad hit boy, 2

13-year-old cites incident not related to death

### What's next

- Samuel Courtland's trial resumes at 9 a.m. today. He is accused of murdering and abusing Jalyn Daniel, the 2-year-old son of his former live-in girlfriend.

By Susan Vela  
Lansing State Journal

A 13-year-old boy testified against his father, Samuel Courtland, Thursday, saying he once saw him hit the 2-year-old son of Courtland's former live-in girlfriend.

According to Courtland's son, his father had punished Jalyn Daniel in the kitchen by striking him three times on the bottom, but not very hard.

Jalyn had misbehaved, but prosecutors contend Courtland's stricter punishments were abuse and led to Jalyn's death on May 14, 2005.

Courtland, 32, is charged with murder and child abuse and could face life in prison if found guilty.

Jalyn's mother, Cynthia Daniel, already has pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and child abuse.

Prosecutors have said she ignored the abuse happening in her home on Grovenburg Road until it was too late.

She will be sentenced next week, possibly for three to six years, and must testify against Courtland as part of a plea agreement.

Evidence presented Thursday also focused on Daniel's parenting style.

Jalyn's 8-year-old sibling "indicated that the mother has whipped him, but not as bad as Sam," said Stephen Guertin, medical director of Sparrow Hospital's Regional Children's Center.

Guertin also testified that some of the marks found on the child's body seemed to be from a belt and could be from beatings that happened up to two years ago.

There also were marks indicating that the child had been tied at his ankles, elbows and wrists.

Defense attorney Peter Samouris has said his client denies hurting Daniel's children. Instead, he said that she pleaded guilty to save herself.

Thursday's testimony also delved into Jalyn's last days alive.

Family friend Lillian Martin said she and Cynthia Daniel returned from a Mount Pleasant casino in

the early hours of May 13, 2005, to find Jalyn wheezing and groggy.

"He needed to go to the hospital," Martin said. "His hand was swollen blue (and) swollen like a pincushion.

"I wasn't really concerned about the hand being swollen. I was concerned about the wheezing."

Both Courtland and Daniel refused to take the child to the hospital. Jalyn died the next day.

He had burn marks on his feet, crushed bones in one hand and the imprint of a household iron on his back and buttocks.

His limbs were stiffened with rigor mortis, indicating he had been dead for hours.

Pathologist Daniel Remick said Jalyn's injuries compromised the youngster's ability to fight infections.

Remick discovered bacterial pneumonia when studying Jalyn's lung tissue after his death.

"It was sufficiently severe that it was destroying the lung tissue," Remick said of the pneumonia.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or [svela@lsj.com](mailto:svela@lsj.com).

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Published November 4, 2006

## **Woman admits injecting heroin into nephew, 12**

Aunt also says she gave niece cocaine in her mom's home

Associated Press

MOUNT CLEMENS - A 25-year-old woman told a judge she injected heroin into her 12-year-old nephew and gave him and her 15-year-old niece heroin and cocaine in her mother's suburban Detroit home.

Jacqueline Ellen Vuich, of Warren, made the admission Thursday when she pleaded guilty in Macomb County Circuit Court to charges including first-degree child abuse and keeping a house of prostitution.

Also Thursday, Jan Ruby Catton, Vuich's mother and the grandmother of the two victims, pleaded no contest to seven counts of second-degree child abuse for knowing about and failing to stop the abuse and one count of maintaining a drug house.

Catton, 47, is fighting a charge of keeping a house of prostitution because she said she was unaware of it. She remained free on a \$300,000 bond.

Vuich remained jailed in lieu of a \$300,000 bond.

"We're glad they're taking responsibility and the kids don't have to testify," Assistant Prosecutor Jamie Wittenberg said.

Both women were scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 29 by Circuit Judge Matthew Switalski. Vuich likely will spend at least six to 10 years in prison, The Macomb Daily reported. Catton, whose no-contest pleas are not admissions of guilt but are treated as such for sentencing, faces a minimum penalty of two months in jail.

The 12-year-old overdosed Jan. 24 and had to be hospitalized, which alerted authorities to the women.

Catton was the legal guardian of five children who lived in the home. Authorities have removed nine children from it.



## Serotonin may be key to cycle of abuse

Monkeys abused as babies who hurt their own children had reduced levels

**Reuters**

Updated: 11:09 a.m. ET Nov 2, 2006

WASHINGTON - A study focusing on the role of a important brain chemical sheds new light on why victims of childhood abuse may themselves become abusers as adults, and points to a possible remedy, researchers said on Thursday.

They looked at levels of serotonin — a chemical that transmits impulses in the brain — in rhesus monkeys, but has implications for understanding child abuse in people because of biological similarities in humans and monkeys, they said.

When baby monkeys in the study experienced high amounts of abuse and rejection from their mother in the month after birth, their brains often produced less serotonin. Low levels of serotonin are linked to anxiety, depression and aggression in monkeys and people.

The researchers followed monkey infants from birth into adulthood. They found that female monkeys that had been abused by their mothers as infants and later became abusive mothers had about 10 to 20 percent less serotonin than females that had been abused as babies but did not become abusive parents.

### Understanding the cycle

Experts long have known that suffering childhood abuse raises the probability a person will become an abusive parent, and have tried to find the reason — for example, repeating behavior learned early in life or, alternatively, long-term changes in brain processes governing emotions.

"Our results suggest that the system is affected by early trauma, early experience, and that these long-term changes in the brain might contribute to the occurrence of abusive parenting in adulthood," University of Chicago researcher Dario Maestripietri said in an interview.

Maestripietri, lead author of the study in the journal Behavioral Neuroscience, said if research confirms that the same changes in brain development also occur in humans, then there could be the potential for intervention using drugs.

Maestripietri said drugs that raise brain serotonin levels might lower the chances an abused child becomes an abusive parent.

The team watched mothers as they parented to note hitting and other negative behaviors toward their infants. They swapped monkey infants at birth between different mothers to determine that the observed changes did not merely reflect genetic similarities between babies and their mothers.

"I think we've made another step forward in understanding exactly how early experience affects this inter-generational transmission of abuse," Maestripietri added.

The abuse included having the mother grab babies by the leg or tail, step on them, pin them down or throw them in the air, Maestripietri said. The study did not look at paternal abuse because it involved a monkey species whose parental care is entirely performed by females, he said.

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11/04/2006

***News in Brief*****Convicted child abuser to be freed**

TRAVERSE CITY — A Traverse City man convicted of child abuse will be released from jail with two years probation after spending more than a year there since being charged.

Kyle Adam Scott, 23, was sentenced to one year in jail and two years probation for the abuse of his former girlfriend's 2-year-old daughter last year. Scott has spent over a year in jail since the incident occurred and will be released with credit for time served, Circuit Judge Thomas G. Power ruled Friday. Power ordered that Scott have no contact with the victim, her mother or anyone 17 years old or younger as a condition of his probation.

Scott was convicted of second-degree child abuse, but was acquitted of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and first-degree child abuse charges in a September jury trial. Jurors could not decide on a second charge of first-degree criminal sexual conduct — a count that was later dismissed.

Scott was accused of physically and sexually assaulting the child last year while his ex-girlfriend was at work.

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Detroit News

Saturday, November 04, 2006

Wayne Briefs

Plymouth

## **Man, 23, faces Internet child sex abuse charge**

Paul Alan Dreier, 23, of Westland, was charged Friday for using the Internet to arrange a sexual encounter with a minor, Attorney General Mike Cox announced. He alleged Dreier chatted online with an undercover agent posing as a 13-year-old boy and proposed meeting him in a Northville parking lot. Dreier, who works as a security guard in Livonia, is a student at Madonna University, Cox said. Dreier faces one count of child sexually abusive activity and one count using a computer to commit the crime of child sexually abusive activity. Both are 20-year felonies.



## Sex offender faces prison for school visit

Saturday, November 04, 2006

### THE SAGINAW NEWS

A convicted sex offender has found himself in trouble again.

Samuel M. Neupert, 28, attended his child's play Oct. 27 at Ganiard Elementary School in Mount Pleasant, though as a convicted sex offender he is prohibited from coming on school grounds, said state police Sgt. Gary Green of the Mount Pleasant Post.

"A probation officer saw him and knew that he was not supposed to be attending the play," Green said.

The probation officer contacted state police, who arrested Neupert on Wednesday at his Mount Pleasant home, Green said.

Isabella County Magistrate Sandra Strauss arraigned Neupert on Thursday on a charge of failure to comply with the Sex Offender Registry Act. If convicted, he could face up to four years in prison.

Prosecutors said Neupert was convicted in Buffalo, N.Y., in 2001, on a charge of attempted rape.

Department of Corrections records show that Neupert is not allowed within 1,000 feet of schools and child care centers, parks, pools or playgrounds. v

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## A LOVE FROM LOSS: A dying woman asks her best friend and her husband to start a new family -- with 10 adopted children

**BY JACK KRESNAK**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*November 4, 2006*

It wasn't death that longtime foster and adoptive parent Linda Parsons of Taylor feared as she slowly lost her battle to colon cancer.

Parsons' worry was for her kids -- four foster children aged 7 to 17 at the time of her diagnosis in March 2001. She and her husband of 26 years, Bob Parsons, had adopted them all.

And what about Bob?

The answer, Linda Parsons decided, was for him to get together with her best friend, Judi Bradley, a single foster mother who, in 2001, had four adopted foster children of her own and later added two more.

Linda Parsons died at age 54 on Aug. 18, 2005.

And on Oct. 7 of this year, Judi Bradley and Bob Parsons honored her memory as they exchanged wedding vows at Greenfield Village, celebrating with more than 100 adults and 68 children during a raucous party.

At the beginning of Adoption Month in Michigan, the Bradley-Parsons family story is a fitting example of what good foster and adoptive parents do for abused and neglected kids.

And it presents an antidote to the horrific images left by the cases of 7-year-old Ricky Holland and 2-year-olds Isaac Lethbridge and Allison Newman -- Michigan children who died recently in foster or adoptive homes.

### Arms always open

Judi Bradley, who became a state-licensed foster parent in 1985, began caring for someone else's children as a teenager. Then living in Redford Township, Bradley helped raise four kids who lived next door and whose mother died of a brain tumor in 1976.

"She just always had such an open heart," one of those kids, Julie Palmer, now 39 of Chesterfield Township, said of Bradley. "Even when she was younger, she was always taking care of people and not turning anybody away."

Palmer said Bradley's example led her to become a foster and adoptive parent in Macomb County, though



Judi Bradley laughs with Terri Hocking of Howell as she mixes with friends and family after her wedding last month in Dearborn. Bradley and husband Bob met each other in 1993 through fostering children. (MADALYN RUGGIERO/Special to the Free Press)

### How you can adopt a child

You don't have to be a perfect person -- or even a married one -- to be an adoptive parent of a child in Michigan's foster care system. You don't even have to be a foster parent first.

But be prepared for a thorough background check, including any criminal convictions, and be ready to provide solid references, state officials said.

There currently are about 4,400 children available for adoption, though plans are in place for many of them.

Many private, nonprofit, child-placing agencies in Michigan provide adoption services even if you do not wish to be a licensed foster parent first. Foster parents who care for children for more than a year generally are given priority when parental rights are terminated and those children are available for adoption.

at first she didn't think she could do it.

"After some time and really praying about it, though, I did," Palmer said. "I probably would not have known what foster care was if it hadn't been for watching Judi all those years.

"It's just amazing what her whole life has been about and she still doesn't turn kids away."

### **Love knows no racial bounds**

As a youngster, Bradley, now 48, also helped her parents raise the schizophrenic daughter of a family friend from age 2 to 11 and then became a licensed foster parent to care for the girl until she turned 14.

Bradley then went to college, earning a bachelor's degree in 1992 in early childhood psychology from what was then Mercy College in Detroit. She worked as a licensed social worker and worked at three nonprofit agencies in Wayne County.

As she was leaving one of the agencies, Bradley was concerned about a young boy who had just come into care.

"This little boy stole my heart," Bradley said. "I told the agency if he ever needs a home, call me. Two weeks after I left, they called me."

That child, Eric, is now 20 and in the U.S. Marines serving in Japan, Bradley said.

Bradley's foster children kept coming, the majority of them African-American, including Toyia, who came to Bradley's home in July 1994 as a 6-week-old premature baby.

Toyia was the first of the six foster kids Bradley eventually adopted, despite the reluctance of some foster care workers to sanction adoptions of black children by white foster parents like Bradley.

But Bradley showed a remarkable ability to connect with them and to keep lines of communication open to the children's biological families. She allows her adopted children to see their biological families if the children want to and if the relatives have demonstrated responsible behavior.

"There's no way that I can give them their culture," Bradley said. "I can't. I'm white. I can't pretend to be a black person for these children."

With her professional background, Bradley often fought battles with social workers, lawyers, extended family members and even judges over what she believed was in the best interest for her kids. She won some battles and lost others, but she was known for her willingness to give advice and support to other foster and adoptive parents.

### **Something clicks**

Through fostering, Bradley met Linda and Bob Parsons in 1993. The Parsons also had adopted four foster kids, including Tony, who was then about the same age as Judi's baby Toyia.

Bob Parsons, now 54, is an ironworker who often worked long days, so Judi and Linda would pile all their kids into a van and head out to the

To learn more, check these organizations:

- The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org), or call 800-589-6273 for a list of adoption agencies in your area. The MARE Web site also has information about training for potential adoptive parents who have no experience, and it has a link to biographical sketches of children available for adoption.

- There are hundreds of children in Michigan's foster care system who are available for adoption. Go to [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs) to learn how to contact local offices for more information.

Here are other helpful Web sites and phone numbers:

- [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) or 888-200-4005

- [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org)

- Michigan Adoption Day is Nov. 21. For events, visit the Michigan Supreme Court Web site at <http://courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/press/michiganadoptiondayindex.htm>.

**-- JACK KRESNAK**

Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania or to Boston, where Judi said the wheel fell off their van one time in 2003. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Parsons had met Linda, his second wife, in a Bible study class in 1979. After they were married and living in Southgate, Linda had several miscarriages, so they decided to become foster parents, hoping to adopt.

Their first three foster kids were biological sisters, and Bob and Linda adopted them when they became available. Tony was their fourth adopted child.

Tony and Toyia became fast friends as youngsters and, when they were 6, the families staged a mock wedding ceremony for them at a family cottage on Portage Lake, complete with a Halloween costume wedding dress for Toyia and a tie for Tony.

After her cancer diagnosis in 2001, Linda was in remission for nine months. When the cancer came back in 2002 and Linda was given only four to five months to live, she even suggested that Judi and her kids move in with them. That didn't happen, but Linda continued to say that it was OK with her if Judi and Bob were to fall in love.

Judi said she and Bob always shrugged it off.

"You don't entertain the thought of being with someone else's husband," Judi said.

Said Bob: "I thought to myself, did I really want to start over? ... Did I want to start another family all over again? Did I want a lady with six kids? Things like that went through my head."

But about two months after Linda's death, Bob was helping Judi put together a swing set in the backyard of Judi's home when something clicked.

"She was up on the top, holding something for me, and I was down at the bottom and I looked up at her and something hit me," Bob said. "It just changed the way I was looking at her and the way I felt about her."

They began to date and, a month later, Bob proposed. He knew Linda would have been happy.

"I just feel that she's here and she approves," Bob said. "She was in favor of this all along."

### **One big family**

Bob, who has two grown daughters with his first wife, has moved with his two youngest kids into Judi's eight-bedroom home in western Wayne County.

The blended family now consists of Bob's kids -- Catherine, 34; Deanna, 31; Emma, 23; Roger, 20; Ashley, 18, and Tony, 12 -- and Judi's kids -- Toyia, 12; Tiara, 11; Allison, 9; Sean, 9; Kyle, 5, and Faith, 3.

Catherine and Deanna are Bob's kids from his first marriage, and all of the kids live at home except Roger, Emma, Catherine and Deanna.

"All the kids, they'd been together for so long that it really wasn't a big transition for them," Bob said. "My son and Toyia, they argue like brother and sister."

Pat Hanley of Ferndale, a friend of both Judi and Linda, became a foster and adoptive parent because of their example.

"Adoption is the way to go; I love it," said Hanley, 53. "It's the greatest gift in your life. What I wanted to adopt was a 3-year-old. I got a 7-year-old and I'm thrilled. God gave me the exact kid I would've had anyway."

But being a foster parent is tough, especially when a child must be moved somewhere else or returned to the biological family.

"The greatest joys of my life have come from foster care, and the biggest heartbreak came from foster care," Hanley said. "The whole process, from fostering to adopting, is kind of a miracle."

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or [jkresnak@freepress.com](mailto:jkresnak@freepress.com).

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## A heart for special-needs kids

Monday, November 06, 2006

**By Ted Roelofs**

**The Grand Rapids Press**

At this stage in their lives, many couples book flights to Florida or make weekend plans to visit the grandkids.

Harold and Jan Woods, of Rockford, are busy with other priorities.

"This is my retirement," said Jan Woods, 63, referring to a lifetime of love for special-needs children that others had cast aside.

The Woodses were to be honored today for their decades of dedication as recipients of the congressional "Angels in Adoption" award.

Ron Apol, coordinator of the special needs program for D.A. Blodgett Services for Children & Families, said the Woodses belong in a category of their own.

"What do you say about these people? It just goes on and on," he said. "They are at the age where most people are off in Florida, and they continue to make a difference in kids' lives."

Numbers tell part of the story for Jan Woods, a pediatric nurse, and Harold, 64, a retired construction supervisor. The couple have furnished foster care for more than 50 children over the past 35 years. In addition to raising seven biological children, they have adopted seven special-needs children.

But statistics do not gauge the heart and endless hours they have given.

In 2003, they were granted adoption of Christopher James Woods, who was dumped as an infant into the hands of strangers at a South Carolina carnival. The mother and father disappeared.

Weeks later, in January 2002, Christopher was found nearly lifeless in a mobile home near Stanwood, the victim of violent shaking by his mother's ex-husband. He was left near death, blind and with severe brain damage.

Christopher is now 5 and "doing very very well" in their Rockford home, Jan Woods said. "He is a total quadriplegic. He can do nothing but smile, but that smile is worth \$10 million."

Then there is 2-year-old Alexis Woods.

Born without a brain stem, the child Jan calls "Miss Alexis" wasn't supposed to live four days.

"Then it was four months. ... and now she is going to be 3 next month," Jan said.

Before that, they took in 2-year-old David Jackson. He came to them after his birth father raped and violently shook him, causing brain damage that ultimately led to his death.

These are children some might say are beyond help. To the Woodses, they deserve the same dignity as any of us.

Earlier this year, the Woodses butted heads with their pediatrician, who advised them to let Alexis die as her tracheal tube began to close.

They got another doctor to insert a tube, allowing Alexis to breathe. They later got a letter that said her children were no longer welcome in their pediatrician's office.

Jan Woods will tell you that what they do is not easy.

Christopher, for example, must be fed every few hours through a tube connected to his stomach. He needs medication several times a day. He needs constant therapy to keep his body from stiffening.

All this means that even a day away from home is something of an ordeal.

"It's not all fun and glory. To go out to dinner I have to get a nurse in here," Jan Woods said.

But she also will tell you these kids deserve the best we have.

"I think that everybody that sees them knows that they are wonderful kids," she said. "You can be sad and wondering why you do it and when you see that smile it makes it all worth it."

**Send e-mail to the author: [troelofs@grpress.com](mailto:troelofs@grpress.com)**

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## Muskegon Chronicle

### Son, 56, faces trial in father's fleecing

Monday, November 06, 2006

By Lisa Medendorp

**CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER**

An alleged plot to deprive an 88-year-old Fruitport Township man of hundreds of thousands of dollars has resulted in criminal charges against his son, a former Muskegon man, and the son's girlfriend.

Alan Kane Davis, 56, of Livingston, Texas, was arraigned last week before 60th District Judge Harold F. Closz III on a charge of embezzlement from a vulnerable adult of \$20,000 or more, a 10-year felony.

Bail was set at \$150,000 cash or surety.

Davis was extradited from Texas, and his girlfriend, Barbara Altemeier, 55, remains in Texas fighting extradition, authorities said. She is charged on a warrant with the same offense.

The victim was basically taken on a two month "road trip" by his son and Altemeier and ended up Richardson, Texas, prosecutors said. The elderly man is now back in the Muskegon area.

The convoluted scheme involved a new will, a power of attorney and allegedly transferring funds to various accounts across the country -- all with the aim of spending the victim's money.

At one point, Fruitport Township police believed it was possible the elderly man had been murdered. Blood-soaked clothing was found in a utility trailer on property he owned in Sullivan Township.

As it was, the suspects allegedly "controlled everything from what he ate, to what he wore, to what he did," said Fruitport Township Detective James Schultz.

Schultz said he and Norton Shores Detective Elmer Ogg tracked approximately a quarter-million dollars in funds that had been transferred to several different banking locations.

"We've recovered a large majority of this money from banks in the western states," Schultz said, adding that possible additional charges in the case are pending.

Davis listed himself as unemployed on a court document.

Schultz said Davis and his girlfriend moved in with the victim in early April. A trust originally had been set up with the son in control, but some allegedly inappropriate transfers of money, totaling approximately \$114,000, were noticed by relatives, Schultz said. Davis' duties with the trust were terminated.

In mid-August, Davis and Altemeier took his father on a trip to North Loop, Neb., where the elderly man grew up. But other family members and neighbors became concerned when the victim did not return and they did not hear anything from him.

On Sept. 13, a report was filed with Fruitport Township police.

In the meantime, Davis and Altemeier had taken the victim from Nebraska to Battle Creek, where he had relatives, Muskegon County Prosecutor Tony Tague said.

There, the elderly man allegedly was forced to make a new will naming his son as sole beneficiary and giving power of attorney to Altemeier for medical care, Tague said. Davis was also to oversee his father's

finances.

The police investigation un-covered "financial irregularities," Schultz said, and a warrant for Davis was issued.

Altemeier headed for Texas with the victim, and his son returned to Muskegon to appear at an unrelated court hearing. Afterward, he was questioned by police, who found him "very evasive," Schultz said, "and he refused to give the exact location of his father." Davis then apparently left for Texas.

"We had no idea where (the victim) was," Schultz said. Police got search warrants for Altemeier's cellular phone records and determined she was in Richardson, Texas.

Authorities also learned that \$90,000 had been transferred from a branch of the victim's bank to a bank in Arizona, Tague said. "The investigation determined they were going to set up accounts across the country so it (the theft) would be more difficult to detect."

The couple intimidated the elderly man, Tague said, and on the way to Texas, Altemeier took him to Neosho, Missouri. He was told the police were after him and if they caught him, he would be put in "an old folks home" and all his money would be taken away, Tague said.

In Texas, Davis and his girlfriend "got credit cards in (the victim's name) and accumulated about \$7,000 in credit card debt, much of it for hotels and food," Tague said.

By then, police were getting some indications that the elderly man was alive. "He was allowed some phone calls and was allowed to talk very briefly to family, but the calls were controlled," Schultz said. "It was as if he was told what to say."

Altemeier also called the elderly man's relatives in Muskegon, asking them to take care of certain business involving his rental property, but she was blocking caller ID and refusing to tell people where they were, police said.

On Oct. 17, Schultz got a call from a Wyoming bank official who said Altemeier was then attempting to do a wire transfer to a drugstore in Dallas. Schultz said detectives from Dallas and Richardson responded to the drugstore, where Davis and Altemeier were arrested. A warrant was then issued for Altemeier.

The elderly man was found in a nearby hotel. "He said he did not want to be in Texas and that he was made to sign paperwork and he didn't know what it was," Schultz said. "He said they had been giving him some sort of medications."

Preliminary examination for Davis has been scheduled for Nov. 15.

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## ROCHELLE RILEY: Survey aims to help foster youths' futures

**BY ROCHELLE RILEY**  
FREE PRESS COLUMNIST

November 3, 2006

As part of an increased effort to help former foster children have better lives as adults, Wayne County Community College District plans to conduct the first-ever statewide assessment of their needs.

The survey, to be distributed to current and former foster youth, will ask questions ranging from their access to a computer to whether they are able to receive regular dental care. It also will try to determine what youth know about current services.

### Overwhelming response

A Wayne State University study released last spring found that more than 49% of youth who aged out of foster care in 2002 and 2003 in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties were homeless at some point during their first three years on their own, and 25.4% were homeless immediately after aging out.

The study, done by WSU's Research Group on Homelessness and Poverty, also found that 36% had to return to the homes they were originally moved from and 16.7% lived on the streets, in cars or in abandoned buildings.

"If we can find out what they don't know, we can supply it, and if we find out what they need, we can provide it," said Dr. Curtis Ivery, chancellor of the five-campus WCCCD.

The college announced last week that it would create a \$7-million transitional residence and resource center to provide temporary housing, financial and educational information and doctor referrals for some 100-200 young adults leaving foster care.

Ivery said his office has since been deluged with phone calls lauding the project.

"Unanticipated and overwhelming," he said. "It's been like Grand Central Station here."

The center, the first of its kind in Michigan, would be housed at WCCCD's new northwest Detroit campus or on a site near Comerica Park.

### Mapping ways to fill needs

Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow said the state would work with WCCCD to distribute the surveys to foster children 14 and older and former foster youth up to age 23.

"This survey is a great thing," she said. "The more information we have about the needs of our older youths, the better able we will be to develop programs and services that support ... their goals."

The surveys also will be distributed through Youth Opportunities Boards, panels of former foster youth who advocate for better aid.

WCCCD Provost Derrick Manns said the survey results would be used to create a "Most Frequently Asked Questions Guide" that volunteers and youth can use.

But the survey results will be used for so much more: They will paint a portrait of youth who got pushed into a system and then lost after leaving it.

Every bit of information the survey yields will help the state do its job better and will help the community college create something that will do for these young people what hasn't been done before: Give them a solid start.

**ROCHELLE RILEY'S** columns appear Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Catch her on "Am I Right?" at 8:30 p.m. Fridays on Detroit Public Television (TV-56). Contact her at [riley99@freepress.com](mailto:riley99@freepress.com) or 313-223-4473.



## Child care program gets grant for new minivan

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

**MT. MORRIS TOWNSHIP**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Monday, November 06, 2006

**By George Jaksa**

**JOURNAL STAFF WRITER**

Corcoran House, a treatment house for problem children, has received a \$5,000 grant from the Frederick and Stella Loeb Charitable Trust toward purchase of a new minivan.

The facility, 8212 N. Jennings Road, houses 14 girls between 12-17 and operates a day treatment program for other youth.

It is part of Holy Cross Children's Services, a nonprofit program headquartered in Clinton caring for about 1,000 boys and girls and their families teaching them to deal with problems.

- George Jaksa

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Published November 5, 2006

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## Be WinterWise and conserve energy at home

LANSING — The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) recently reminded customers that now is the time to "Be WinterWise" and increase the energy efficiency of their homes. The MPSC's updated Be WinterWise Web site contains conservation tips, as well as information on financial assistance programs available for low-income customers.

"While natural gas bills this heating season are expected to be about \$20 less per month than last winter, it is still wise to make energy efficient improvements now - before the cold temperatures take hold," said MPSC Chairman J. Peter Lark.

Easy energy saving tips include:

- Cleaning or replacing furnace filters regularly, according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Lowering the thermostat on your water heater. A setting of 120 degrees is comfortable for most uses.
- Adding insulation to attics and walls, if needed.
- Installing a programmable thermostat that automatically dials down the temperature at night and when no one is home.
- Insulating gas or oil hot-water storage tank and pipes, being careful not to cover the thermostat.

To save even more money, the MPSC notes that federal tax credits for certain energy efficient improvements are available for improvements made in 2006 and 2007. Tax credits vary depending on the type of improvement, but can be substantial. More information is available on the U.S. Department of Energy's Web site: [doe.gov](http://doe.gov).

For low-income customers, the MPSC today also announced \$45 million in grants for low-income energy assistance. Another \$15 million in grants will soon be awarded for low-income energy efficiency.

Additional help for low-income customers will come from a new, voluntary agreement with Michigan natural gas and electric utilities designed to protect more people from winter shut-offs. Customers should contact their local utilities for more information.

Other financial assistance programs are:

- Utility budget payment plans, available to any residential customer.
- The Michigan Home Heating Credit form (MI-1040CR-7), with instructions from the

Michigan Department of Treasury, will be sent to those who filed a Home Heating Credit in 2006. If you do not receive a home heating credit booklet, they are available on-line at <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury> . Forms will also be available by the end of January wherever tax forms are located. After February, forms will be available by calling 1-800-367-6263. Forms must be filed by September 30, 2007.

- Local Michigan Department of Human Services offices administer the State Emergency Relief Program.
- The Internal Revenue Service offers an Earned Income Credit on federal tax forms.

The MPSC's "Be WinterWise" campaign is designed to make people aware of higher natural gas prices, to provide information on what people can do now to lower their bills, and to provide information on the variety of financial assistance programs available to low-income utility customers. More information is available on the "Be WinterWise" Web site located at: [michigan.gov/bewinterwise](http://michigan.gov/bewinterwise).

Other conservation tips are available at [energysavers.org](http://energysavers.org) or by calling the MPSC at 1-800-292-9555.

— From the Michigan Public Service Commission

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## Church kids get taste of homelessness, hunger

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

**TYRONE TOWNSHIP**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Monday, November 06, 2006

**By George Jaksa**

**JOURNAL STAFF WRITER**

About 50 kindergarten-12th grade boys and girls Friday got a taste of homelessness and hunger when they spent the night sleeping in cardboard boxes outside the home of Vicki Ribar on Tipsico Lake Road.

Kids collected pledges for their 12-hour experience that ended at 7 a.m. today. Ribar, director of youth and family ministries for Trinity Lutheran Church, Fenton, said pledges, which are matched up to \$750 by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, will be given to Carriage Town Ministries of Flint and Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan. In the past, up to \$2,500 has been collected, including the Thrivent match, Ribar said.

Kids huddled around camp fires as they sipped a cup of soup and munched on a piece of bread. The drank all the water they wanted and visited an outside portable toilet if needed. At the end of the night they were given a mini box of cereal with milk.

"Our slogan is 'It's cold enough to hurt but not cold enough to kill,'" commented Ribar of the sixth annual box-out that is held on the first weekend of November.

- George Jaksa

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## Students fight homelessness

Monday, November 06, 2006

SPRING LAKE -- SPRING LAKE -- Spring Lake High School students are seeking pledges for the Muskegon Rescue Mission and will spend the night of Nov. 17 sleeping outside in cardboard boxes to earn the money. Students must come up with a minimum donation of \$20 to participate in the event, held to raise empathy for the homeless. The Muskegon Rescue Mission is affiliated with the mission in Holland. The event will be in the high school parking lot, and breakfast will be served at 5:30 a.m..

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Warm the Children

Sunday, November 05, 2006

**What:** A program sponsored by The News that uses reader donations to buy winter clothing for needy children. The News pays all administrative costs, so a dollar donated is a dollar for a child.

**When:** Each autumn.

**Volunteers:** About 400 a year, but more are needed this year.

**Donations:** Readers contribute more than \$100,000 a year to the project.

**To volunteer as a shopper:** Please call program coordinator Norma Chase at 734-994-6710.

**For more information:** 734-994-6733.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Warm the Children volunteers needed

More children are in need this year than ever, coordinator says

Sunday, November 05, 2006

**BY KHALIL E. HACHEM**

**News Staff Reporter**

For nine years, Ann Arbor News readers have opened their hearts and wallets, donating to the Warm the Children, the charity arm of the News. The money buys warm clothing for needy children in Livingston and Washtenaw counties, and to make it happen, about 400 volunteers meet families at Meijer to help them shop.

This year, buying began in September, but the charity is in desperate need of volunteer shoppers, said Norma Chase, coordinator of the project. The plan is to serve about 1,800 children, she said.

"We have more children in need than ever this year," Chase said. "We can serve more children if we get more volunteers."

Chase said readers donate to the program, and children in dire need are selected by schools, churches and organizations. Children are served on a first-come, first-serve basis, and volunteers meet the parents and children at a Meijer store for a \$90-a-child shopping spree. Meijer is a partner in the project and has donated about \$10,000 a year to the effort as well as serving as the shopping destination.

Shoppers spend about two hours with the family, buying coats, gloves, hats, shirts and pants, and pay for the clothes using Warm the Children purchase orders supplied by The News.

About 40 organizations, including religious and service groups, participate in the program each year. But there are ever more children in need, Chase said, so the project is in need of more volunteer shoppers this year.

Susan Wachsberg said she decided to participate this year because all of the donations go to the children. The News absorbs all administrative costs, and the time donated by the volunteers is a key part of the program.

"I rather my money and time go to an organization like this," Wachsberg said. "It's worth the effort."

In the past, some donors have done inventive and unusual things to participate in the program, such as knitting hats, mittens and scarves for the children, or students selling popsicles to raise money for the Warm the Children.

Families send thank-you cards for the gifts that keep their loved ones warm in the winter.

Jeff Poissant, who volunteered through the Ann Arbor Jaycees last year, said volunteering to buy clothes for the children is a rewarding experience because it puts a smile on the children's faces and gets them much-needed items for the winter.

"It was a great feeling to see them smile," he said.

Khalil E. Hachem can be reached at [khachem@annarbornews.com](mailto:khachem@annarbornews.com) or 734-482-3225.

# Midland Daily News

Thank you letters

11/04/2006

## Families helped

### To the editor:

On behalf of the Midland Countywide Baby Shower Committee, I would like to tell the community about all the generous people and agencies that made our event such a success on Oct. 21.

New and expectant families were provided with a morning agency fair with information on car seat safety by Officer Greg Tait of Midland City Police, and safe sleep recommendations by Deborah Campbell of Child Care Concepts 4-C's. They also were treated to lunch and cake, baby supplies and gifts, and goodie bags. This event was supported by, and made possible through financial and material contributions by the following: Midland County Child Protection Council, Midland Community Center, Midland Kiwanis Club, Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, Memorial Presbyterian Church, Kiwassee Kiwanis of Midland, Midland Lions Club, Midland County Dept. of Public Health, Medela, Inc., Department of Human Services, American Baby, Target, Little Caesar's Pizza, Wendy's, TCBY, Sanford IGA, Midland City Fire Dept., Midland City Police Dept., Midland County Sheriff's Office., Glover's Rexall Pharmacy, Child Care Concepts 4-C's, Applebee's, MidMichigan Medical Center-Midland, Early On, NEMCSA Head Start, We Wanna Be Cowboys 4-H, Beth Murray, Libby Varner, North Midland Family Center, West Midland Family Center, Monica Pardell, Tomorrow's Child, and many anonymous donors.

Agencies that participated in the agency fair for families: WIC, Midland Cancer Services, Child Care Concepts 4-C's, Literacy Council, Chippewa Nature Center, Midland County Sheriff's Office, MSU Extension of Midland County, Midland County Dept. of Public Health, La Leche League, Family and Children's Service of Midland, Midland County Child Protection Council, Pregnancy Resource Center, MidMichigan Medical Center-Midland, Early On, MOPS, Midland County Preschool Partnership, MCESA, Success By Six, Coleman Community Network, Grace A. Dow Library and Early Head Start.

Last, but not least, the agencies represented on the committee which brought the event to life: Midland County Health Department, Success By Six, MSU Extension of Midland County, Midland County Child Protection Council, Early On, Family and Children's Service of Midland, WIC, Early Head Start, Child Care Concepts 4-C's, NEMCSA Head Start, Midland Community Center, and Mid Michigan Community Action Agency.

Thank you, Midland County, for your generous contributions of time, money and talents to provide for the safety, health and well being of more than 60 new families.

Kathleen Schaar, RN, BSN  
2006 Countywide Baby Shower Chair  
Midland County Dept. of Public Health

## HE SAID, SHE SAID: Candidates hit metro churches with 2 days to go

**DEVOS pushes his faith; his ads call her a liar, weak on welfare**  
**GRANHOLM talks health care, education, calls him threat to state**

**BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF and DAWSON BELL**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

*November 6, 2006*

Gov. Jennifer Granholm pounded the campaign church trail Sunday while Republican challenger Dick DeVos soft-pedaled it, two days before an election dominated by a hard-hitting and hugely expensive race for governor.

Their marathon campaigning continues today with DeVos beginning with appearances in Byron Center near Grand Rapids and finishing the day in metro Detroit. This morning in Livonia, Granholm will begin a 26-hour bus trip across Michigan at 6 a.m.

On Sunday, Granholm blitzed seven churches in Detroit and Ecorse, calling DeVos "a wolf in sheep's clothing" who attempts to hide his conservative views from voters.

Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick joined her at several churches. Granholm derided DeVos -- without naming him -- as a threat to Detroit and Michigan. At each church she denounced Proposal 2, the anti-affirmative action ballot issue that Detroit's mostly black electorate views as a slap at the civil-rights movement.

DeVos spent Sunday morning attending a pair of two-hour services at Detroit World Outreach in Redford Township and later at Christian Tabernacle Church in Southfield. He spoke only briefly at the second, and said afterward, "Church is a place for worship, not giving political speeches."

He introduced his wife and children, described the role faith played in his life and pledged that, if elected, he would follow the admonition to "seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God."

DeVos' deference -- he stayed for the entire service -- impressed Christian Tabernacle parishioner Cassandra Rainey, an accountant from West Bloomfield. But that doesn't mean she'll vote for him. Rainey said she remains a solid Granholm supporter.

At her church appearances, Granholm said Democrats are more interested in the general well-being of average families, and she stressed her concerns to improve access to college and health care coverage for everyone.

"You need me in Lansing," Granholm told parishioners at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, her first stop in a 12-hour day of campaigning.

At Greater Grace Temple, Kilpatrick praised Granholm's work with a Republican Legislature, and called her "my one friend in Lansing."

A backdrop of Sunday's campaigning was The Detroit Free Press-Local 4 Michigan Poll showing Granholm with a 13-percentage point lead (54% to 41%, margin of error plus or minus 4.3 percentage points) over DeVos in a three-day poll ending Thursday. Other recent polls had shown Granholm with a smaller lead. A Mason-Dixon Poll that interviewed voters through Friday night had her ahead by 14 percentage points (52% to 38%, margin of error plus or minus 4 percentage points).

Granholm dismissed the polls, but not the importance of Detroit voters to her re-election hopes.

"Detroit is huge, hugely important," she said.

DeVos also shrugged off polls.

"Pollsters don't run elections or win elections," he said. "The people are the ones who decide."

If DeVos' church appearances were tame, his media campaign was not. His latest two TV ads accused Granholm of lying about his record and refusing to enact a four-year time limit and drug testing for welfare recipients.

That was backed up by full-page newspaper ads in the Sunday Free Press and elsewhere, criticizing Granholm's record on welfare.

Granholm explained her 2005 veto at a Detroit church Sunday. She said the Republican-backed bill for welfare time limits did not allow exceptions for people with a severely limited ability to work, or those who are tending full time to sick relatives.

She said she supports time limits for welfare, but said the bill would have resulted in more homeless people, including children.

Also joining Granholm were U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Rep. John Conyers of Detroit, who is poised to head the U.S. House Judiciary Committee if Democrats take control of the House of Representatives, as many poll experts predict.

Granholm called the election not only a referendum, but "an intervention" of President George W. Bush.

"This is a battle over the heart and soul not just of Detroit and Michigan, but of the nation," she told the congregation at Fellowship Chapel in Detroit. "I implore you to make sure you tell friends and family to get out and vote."

Things got a little testier for DeVos after Sunday services, as he had brunch and greeted diners at the Detroit Breakfast House and Grill near downtown.

Grill co-owner Frank Taylor said he received complaints about DeVos' visit after it was published on DeVos' schedule in the Sunday Free Press. He asked the newspaper to make clear the restaurant did not sponsor the event.

DeVos spokesman John Truscott said the campaign expects complaints when DeVos visits predominantly Democratic Detroit but won't be deterred from courting Detroit voters.

DeVos spent Sunday afternoon visiting Republican volunteer call centers in Dearborn and Livonia before a dinner event in Detroit.

Contact **CHRIS CHRISTOFF** at 517-372-8660 or [christoff@freepress.com](mailto:christoff@freepress.com).

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WZZM13 ONLINE - ABC TELEVISION for ALL OF WEST MICHIGAN

# Granholm surges in poll with boost from women, DeVos' final hope rests on big turnout

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF FREE PRESS LANSING BUREAU CHIEF

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Updated: 11/5/2006 1:18:35 PM

A surge of support from women gave Gov. Jennifer Granholm a double-digit lead over Republican challenger Dick DeVos in a race for governor that's entered its final 48 hours.

Granholm's overall 54% to 41% lead is fueled by her 26 percentage-point margin among women, according to the Detroit Free Press-Local 4 Michigan Poll. DeVos has a 1 percentage-point margin among men.

"That's the dynamic, that's what's opened it up," said J. Ann Selzer of Selzer & Co., which conducted the poll Oct. 31-Nov.2


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Granholm's lead last week was by far the largest measured in any of four polls Selzer has conducted this year, beginning in mid-July. A similar poll in early October showed Granholm with an eight-point lead over DeVos.

Selzer said that while Granholm has a big advantage the race still could hinge on which campaign best spurs its supporters to the polls Tuesday.

"This is all about turnout," she said. "The way this could go for DeVos is voters in metro Detroit stay home and there's an exceptionally high turnout in the west part of the state."

The new poll did not survey voters over the weekend, as both candidates intensified their record-breaking television ad campaigns and blitzed metro Detroit with political celebrities - former President Bill Clinton for Granholm and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani for DeVos - at their sides to rally voters.

Besides showing Granholm with a firm lead, the poll suggests trouble for Republicans on Election Day.

Independent voters said they are more inclined to vote for Democrats than they had been in the past. Independent voters are the key to winning the governor's race and others where neither party has a big advantage.

Also, the poll shows a significantly higher percentage of Democrats than Republicans plan to vote straight ticket this year - 56% to 47% - which would benefit Democrats in their attempt to wrest control of the Michigan House and Senate from the Republicans.

National polls have shown Democrats have a good shot at capturing the U.S. House or Senate, and that the public's anxiety over the war in Iraq is weighing heavily against Republicans.

The Free Press-Local 4 poll shows Granholm held a 17-point edge among independent voters, who likely will decide the outcome of the race. About 5% in the poll said they were undecided or will choose a minor party candidate.

Granholm had a 21-point lead in metro Detroit, which comprises almost half of the state's voters.

DeVos had 10-point leads in western and northern Michigan.

This weekend, both campaigns and the state Republican and Democratic parties launched intense get-out-the-vote campaigns that will continue through Election Day. Both parties claim they will have made millions of contacts with voters, either by phone or with thousands of volunteers walking door-to-door in neighborhoods.

Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land predicts 3.4 million people will vote by absentee ballot or in person on Tuesday, up from nearly 3.2 million in the 2002 gubernatorial election.

Mark Kawas, 56, a retired autoworker from Waterford, said he'll vote for Granholm. He said she straightened out a fiscal mess from her predecessor, Gov. John Engler, and she protected money for schools.

Kawas said his decision for Granholm was sealed by TV ads accusing DeVos of laying off Michigan workers when he was Amway president and expanding the company to China.

"Being an ex-UAW worker, I kind of hate to see those China moves," Kawas said.

Terry Wilson, 39, of Lincoln Park is a laid-off autoworker who's voting for DeVos.

"I don't feel she's doing anything for the state," Wilson said. "There's a lot of jobs we've lost. It's time for new blood to see what they can do."

The poll showed the most potent campaign claim has been the charge by Granholm and state Democrats that DeVos created Amway jobs in China.

Polls have sometimes been poor predictors.



After the 1990 gubernatorial election, incumbent Gov. James Blanchard blamed his stunning loss to Republican John Engler in part on a Detroit News poll published the Sunday before the election showing him up 14 percentage points.

Engler won by a razor-thin margin of 17,000 votes. Blanchard complained many of his supporters didn't vote because they assumed he'd win.

In 2002, more than two weeks before the gubernatorial election, polls showed Granholm led Republican Dick Posthumus by 10 points. She had a 22-point lead among women voters.

Granholm won the election by 4 percentage points.

Granholm held a 27-point lead over her opponent among voters ages 55 and older. Selzer said DeVos could benefit from a large turnout of young voters. He is favored slightly by voters under 35.

Two voters in that category who participated in the poll had differing views.

Yolanda Peoples, 24, of Detroit said she finally made up her mind to vote for Granholm Saturday when she heard DeVos on television talking about the need to put a time limit on welfare.

"It turned me off, he's saying people need to go out and get a job. He's saying it's easy to get a job, like he's going to cut people off," said Peoples. "Time limits are fine, some people need them, but he's not saying he'll make sure people have skills to work, or that there are jobs out there."

Peoples said and her husband, a maintenance worker, are expecting their first child any day.

Nicole Baker, 33, of Otsego is voting for DeVos. She said she voted for Granholm in 2002, even though she disagreed with her pro-choice stance on abortion.

But Baker said she's disappointed with Granholm because of the state's poor jobs climate.

"It's gotten worse in the last year. There was no way I was voting for her," Baker said, adding that she likes DeVos' views opposing abortion.

Baker said her husband, a mechanical engineer, could easily make more money in other states, but they're reluctant to leave their families in Michigan. She said her brother is an Amway distributor and speaks highly of DeVos.

Contact CHRIS CHRISTOFF at 517-372-8660 or christoff@freepress.com. Free Press Staff Writer Dawson Bell contributed to this report.

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## News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Karen Stock (517) 373-7394

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### Eaton County collaborative receives \$120,000 Great Start Collaborative grant

*Early Childhood Investment Corporation grants focus on early childhood development and care*

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**November 6, 2006**

**CHARLOTTE** – The Eaton County Great Start Collaborative today accepted a \$120,000 grant from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) to strengthen early childhood development and care in Eaton County.

ECIC Chief Executive Officer Judy Samelson and Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow presented a ceremonial check to Al Widner, Eaton Intermediate School District superintendent.

The grant is part of a \$3.15 million award to 21 Great Start Collaboratives across Michigan that coordinate community resources and supports to help children from birth to age five and their families. A total of 70 percent of Michigan's poor and minority children now live in a county where a Great Start Collaborative is being convened.

The Early Childhood Investment Corporation, announced in Governor Jennifer Granholm's 2005 State of the State address, provide grants from a mix of public and private funding sources. Grant funding was made possible in August when the Michigan legislature approved a \$1 million appropriation for early childhood collaboratives across the state. This appropriation triggered matching funds from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Fourteen other state collaboratives were funded earlier this year by the Department of Human Services.

"These grants will help bring together the public and private sectors including government, business, civic, faith, education, and community groups to develop a long-standing, sustained focus on early learning and childhood development," Samelson said. "We're grateful for the support of our partners who recognize the importance of investing in early childhood programs."

Intermediate school districts will act as fiduciaries for the grants. In addition to Eaton Intermediate School District, 21 other intermediate school districts and regional educational service areas around the state also were awarded funding for planning and/or implementation of Great Start Collaboratives.

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“Children who participate in high-quality early childhood development programs are better prepared to enter elementary school, are more likely to pursue secondary education and have lower dropout rates and higher high school graduation rates,” Udow said. “By improving the skills of a large fraction of the workforce, these programs for poor children will reduce poverty and strengthen the state’s ability to compete in the global market.”

ECIC is a unique public, nonprofit corporation created to invest in Michigan's youngest citizens. By educating, motivating and involving Michigan citizens in efforts to build and promote a system of supports for young children and their families, all Michigan children can make a Great Start!

For more information about the ECIC, visit <http://www.ecic4kids.org>

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